



December 2022

municipalities

Official Publication of the New Jersey State League of Municipalities



Community-Centric Getting to the heart of town centers

**2022 Executive
Directors Report**

Focus:
Repurposing
Community Hubs





Flemington

A commercial and residential renaissance

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*Executive Director, Flemington
Community Partnership*



Historic Flemington Borough, Hunterdon County's beautiful county seat, with tree-lined streets and charming buildings, offers an exciting crossroads for commerce, agriculture, and the arts, where over 65% of our borough is on the National Register of Historic Places.

Flemington is on the upswing as a regional haven for business entrepreneurs, agri-tourism, and the arts. The borough is known for its “farm-to-festival” events, holiday parades, car shows, 400+ shops, services, and eateries.

The Flemington Community Partnership

The Flemington Community Partnership (FCP) is the borough’s Business Improvement District (BID) with a mission of fostering a thriving business community within the Borough of Flemington. The FCP’s top priorities include advocacy for stakeholders and commercial interests; economic development planning; events and marketing to activate business areas; business recruitment and retainment; and stewardship of public spaces.

The FCP’s top goals for the future of Historic Flemington include:

- Improving the look, feel, and sense of place of our business and transitional areas.
- Improving walkability for economic development and community benefits.
- Creating visible representation on our streets of our history and culture, encouraging public art and preservation.

At a recent FCP stakeholder meeting, speakers included Hunterdon County Economic Development and Tourism representatives, the mayor and borough council liaison, and the Liberty Village Developer. Marc Saluk, director of Hunterdon

County Economic Development and Tourism, unveiled the county’s new tourism campaign, “Explore Hunterdon: The Other Side of Jersey,” designed to draw more attention to the county—and, in doing so, to Historic Flemington—as a tourism destination.

The FCP’s new communications agency, Suasion Communications Group President Susan Adelizzi-Schmidt, also presented its strategy for telling the story of Historic Flemington to a broader audience, highlighting the borough’s strategic marketing and public relations plan.

Additional speakers included Jaime J. Izurieta-Varea, the experience designer for Storefront Mastery, a consultant hired to spearhead “curb to cornice” storefront improvements for the borough’s businesses. A total of 15 businesses will receive grants to improve their storefronts in 2022.

The borough was awarded a Neighborhood Preservation Project Grant for the South End District from the NJ Department of Community Affairs. The \$125,000 yearly grant provides for visible and tangible placemaking for five years. The NPP Funds allow the BID and the borough to focus on placemaking to build a diverse and sustainable arts and cultural district.

Before the pandemic, the borough won a highly competitive \$100,000 NJEDA Opportunity Zone Challenge Grant. This grant funding helped the borough conduct a Community Consensus project and develop a Community Action Plan. Throughout the process, there was clear community consensus around “active streets and more retail,” “enhanced community

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Flemington

arts and playful experiences,” and “greater walkability and improved streets.”

The recent grand reopening of Flemington DIY (Do It Yourself), a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization on Stangl Road, is an example of how the “Community Consensus” process helped reinforce the need for the community facility to reopen. DIY, whose mission is to provide an inclusive art space that engages the community in local arts, inspire social change through art, and invigorate the economic development of Flemington, is a tangible example of how the Community Action Plan led to a great outcome.

“The message is pretty clear,” said Mayor Betsy Driver. “Flemington is a progressive and growing town that embraces innovative business and investment. Whether it’s a diner, fine dining, or a well-curated retail shop, the community is eager for change and more activity, and is ready to support businesses interested in calling Flemington home.”

The Liberty Village Project

Scheduled to break ground in 2023, Liberty Village is another promise of significant growth for Historic Flemington. George Vallone of Hoboken Brownstone plans to transform the borough’s notable Liberty Village Outlet Mall, the First Outlet Mall in America (which had run its course) into a new tree-lined neighborhood. This mix of multi-family residential and townhouses will accommodate many incomes and household sizes and add to the vibrancy and walkability of surrounding commercial areas.



Courthouse Square Project

The Union Hotel, a 200-year-old, 15-room property that once housed journalists reporting on the famed Lindbergh Trial of 1932, is undergoing

a multi-million-dollar refurbishment on Main Street. Plans include the preservation of the hotel’s historic façade and a new 85-room facility, plus 206 apartments and two restaurants with liquor licenses. Opening is planned for commencement in 2023.

A Dynamic Shopping and Dining Destination Revitalization

Flemington is revitalizing its core business areas along Main Street, Stangl Arts & Cultural District, and shopping at our highway circles with new, active, retail destination businesses. As a result, the borough has seen sustained small business growth, with openings and expansions into new spaces and storefronts.

In addition, we have seen business growth and movement from one area of the borough to another, and a significant growth trend where many of our businesses have moved from renting to owning commercial property. Our most recent entrepreneurial owners are opening destination businesses that add to the eclectic appeal of the borough as a must-visit destination for exploring and supporting mom-and-pop shops on our historic streets and in our shopping plazas.

Young Entrepreneur Mecca

Entrepreneurs under the age of 30 are the owners and operators of many businesses that have recently opened in the Borough. Many are local Hunterdon High School graduates. We attribute this trend to the affordable nature of our available retail and a widely shared desire to invest in the borough.





Flemington

active improvement adds immeasurably to Flemingtown's revitalization.

The Borough is a long-standing marketplace for shopping, agricultural innovation, entrepreneurial businesses, and the arts. It has grown as a regional destination with more than 400 businesses, including 50 restaurants, boutiques, a busy craft brewery, a year-round Saturday Farmers Market, art galleries, and over 90 health, wellness, and retail businesses. Flemingtown also boasts several antique shops and bookstores and is a boutique shoppers' dream, with fabulous finds and friendly business owners. Flemingtown Borough is a great place to open a business, live, work from home, or visit! Surrounded by farm-fresh food, quirky shops, go-to businesses, and other walkable amenities, our borough and county are in the sweet spot of New Jersey. 📍

@ For more information about Historic Flemingtown, visit www.loveflemington.com.

Small-Town Success Stories

With outdoor seating, downtown events, vibrant storefronts, a burgeoning Stangl Arts & Cultural District, and a Main Street with a new anchor hotel, retail, housing, and restaurants, Flemingtown offers many exciting opportunities for business owners and residents. Flemingtown businesses Viva Mexico, Echelon Studio, Act 2 Books, DomAlina's, Dolce Restaurant and Printech started as renters whose sustained success allowed them to transition to ownership of their own or additional properties. This trend is both optimistic and crucial in developing

long-term investment in the community.

One of Flemingtown's most recent success stories is Viva Mexico. Owner Librado Arias and his family were a staple at Flemingtown's Turntable Junction, where they rented their space. After years of sustained growth and success, Viva Mexico purchased its own building on Main Street, the former location of a destination restaurant that had been unoccupied for more than a decade. The new Viva Mexico has an expanded interior, an outdoor patio on Main Street, and a garden patio behind the building for al fresco dining. This visible and

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This orientation for municipal officials who are newly elected, reelected, or experienced is fast paced and designed to quickly bring officials up-to-date on important municipal issues. The newly elected officials will get a thorough overview of their major areas of responsibility, key contacts at the State level, and important sources of information and assistance.

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